

What is claimed is:

1. A method to forward messages to forwarding e-mail addresses, the method comprising the steps of:
 - associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses with corresponding forwarding e-mail addresses in an e-mail forwarding computer;
 - providing an electronic address for receiving messages at the e-mail forwarding computer, said messages relating to any of the plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses;
 - receiving said messages at the electronic address;
 - identifying, with the e-mail forwarding computer, a disfavored e-mail address in a received message, the disfavored e-mail address being other than the electronic address for the e-mail forwarding computer;
 - determining, with the e-mail forwarding computer, a forwarding e-mail address associated with the disfavored e-mail address; and
 - forwarding at least a portion of the received message from the e-mail forwarding computer to the associated forwarding e-mail address.
2. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the step of receiving said messages further comprises:
 - receiving said messages as redirected to the electronic address of the e-mail forwarding computer by a server associated with a domain address of the disfavored e-mail address.
3. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the step of providing an electronic address includes providing an Internet web site for inputting messages including disfavored e-mail addresses; and
 - the step of receiving said messages includes receiving said messages from the Internet web site.
4. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein prior to the forwarding step:

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message will be forwarded, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

5. The method of claim 4 further including the steps of:

including an activatable link along with the forwarding confirmation request, wherein the activatable link will automatically send the forwarding confirmation authorization to the e-mail forwarding computer when activated by the message originator.

6. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further comprises:

receiving a forwarding address request indicating a disfavored e-mail address;
sending an address change confirmation request to the disfavored e-mail address;
receiving an address change confirmation response;
authenticating the address change confirmation response; and
storing the forwarding e-mail address and associated disfavored e-mail address for the forwarding address request for which an authenticated address change confirmation response is received.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of authenticating includes identifying that the address change confirmation response came from the disfavored e-mail address.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein:

the steps of sending an address change confirmation request and authenticating the address change confirmation response use encryption verification.

9. The method of claim 6 further comprising the steps of:

identifying unverified forwarding e-mail addresses for which no authenticated address change confirmation response was received;

when the received message includes a disfavored e-mail address with an unverified forwarding e-mail address, sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that an unverified forwarding e-mail address has been determined, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule; and

the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further includes:

identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be associated;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule;

determining whether associating the disfavored e-mail address with a corresponding forwarding address is in accordance with the linked forwarding rule;

aborting the association of the disfavored e-mail address with the corresponding forwarding address if it is not in accordance with the associated forwarding rule

11. The method of claim 10 including the step of setting a forwarding rule for a domain name, the rule disallowing associating forwarding e-mail addresses with disfavored e-mail addresses with the domain name unless a request to make the association is received from a particular address.

12. The method of claim 10 including the step of setting a forwarding rule for a domain name, the rule disallowing associating forwarding e-mail addresses with disfavored e-mail addresses with the domain name unless a request to make the association includes a valid security code.

13. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule; and
the step of forwarding further includes:

identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and

formatting the portion of the message to be forwarded in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule;
identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and

sending a return message to a message originator in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

15. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule;
identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and

wherein the step of forwarding includes forwarding the portion of the message in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the step of forwarding the message in accordance with the linked forwarding rule further includes:

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message will be forwarded, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

17. The method of claim 16 further including the steps of:

including an activatable link along with the forwarding confirmation request, wherein the activatable link will automatically send the forwarding confirmation authorization to the e-mail forwarding computer when activated by the message originator.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein an organization having an e-mail system desires to have messages that are sent to a departed member's e-mail address forwarded to a successor member's e-mail address, and wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses includes:

associating the departed member's disfavored e-mail address with the successor member's e-mail address as a corresponding forwarding address.

19. The method of claim 18 further including the following steps prior to the forwarding step:

identifying that the disfavored e-mail address is that of the departed organization member,

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message originally intended for the departed organization member will be forwarded to the successor organization member, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

20. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further comprises:

registering an organization e-mail system with the e-mail forwarding computer;

uploading domain name information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer;

uploading e-mail address format information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer; and

uploading organization member e-mail address change information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer.

21. The method of claim 20 further including

uploading recipient change flags associated with the address change information indicating that the address change information pertains to a substitution of a new recipient not previously associated with the disfavored e-mail address;

if the determined forwarding e-mail address is associated with a recipient change flag, sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message will be forwarded to a different recipient, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step

22. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of:

receiving an e-mail message at an e-mail system server for an e-mail service provider;

determining at the e-mail system server that the e-mail message is undeliverable;

automatically redirecting the undeliverable e-mail message to the electronic address of the e-mail forwarding computer, the undeliverable e-mail message becoming the received message at the e-mail forwarding computer.

23. The method of claim 22 further including the step of:

determining at the e-mail system server whether the e-mail message includes a flag indicating whether or not to automatically redirect the e-mail message if it is undeliverable; and

returning the undeliverable e-mail message if the flag indicates that the undeliverable e-mail message should not be automatically redirected.

24. The method as recited in claim 22, wherein prior to the step of automatically redirecting the undeliverable e-mail message, including the step of:

sending a redirect confirmation request, indicating that the message will be redirected to the e-mail forwarding computer, to a message originator; and

waiting until a redirecting confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the automatic redirecting step.

25. The method as recited in claim 22 wherein prior to the forwarding step:

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message will be forwarded, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

26. The method of claim 25 further including the steps of:

including an activatable link along with the forwarding confirmation request, wherein the activatable link will automatically send the forwarding confirmation authorization to the e-mail forwarding computer when activated by the message originator.

27. The method as recited in claim 22 wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further comprises:

receiving a forwarding address request indicating a disfavored e-mail address;
sending an address change confirmation request to the disfavored e-mail address;
receiving an address change confirmation response;
authenticating the address change confirmation response; and
storing the forwarding e-mail address and associated disfavored e-mail address for the forwarding address request for which an authenticated address change confirmation response is received.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the step of authenticating includes identifying that the address change confirmation response came from the disfavored e-mail address.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein:
the steps of sending an address change confirmation request and authenticating the address change confirmation response use encryption verification.

30. The method of claim 27 further comprising the steps of:
identifying unverified forwarding e-mail addresses for which no authenticated address change confirmation response was received;
when the received message includes a disfavored e-mail address with an unverified forwarding e-mail address, sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that an unverified forwarding e-mail address has been determined, to a message originator; and
waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

31. The method of claim 22 further comprising the steps of:
linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule; and
the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further includes:
identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be associated;
determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule;
determining whether associating the disfavored e-mail address with a corresponding forwarding address is in accordance with the linked forwarding rule;
aborting the association of the disfavored e-mail address with the corresponding forwarding address if it is not in accordance with the associated forwarding rule

32. The method of claim 31 including the step of setting a forwarding rule for a domain name, the rule disallowing associating forwarding e-mail addresses with disfavored e-mail addresses with the domain name unless a request to make the association is received from a particular address.

33. The method of claim 31 including the step of setting a forwarding rule for a domain name, the rule disallowing associating forwarding e-mail addresses with disfavored e-mail addresses with the domain name unless a request to make the association includes a valid security code.

34. The method of claim 22 further comprising the step of:

linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule; and

the step of forwarding further includes:

identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and

formatting the portion of the message to be forwarded in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

35. The method of claim 22 further comprising the steps of:

linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule;

identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and

sending a return message to a message originator in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

36. The method of claim 22 further comprising the steps of:

linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule;
 identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;
 determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and
 wherein the step of forwarding includes forwarding the portion of the message in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein the step of forwarding the message in accordance with the linked forwarding rule further includes:

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message will be forwarded, to a message originator; and
 waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

38. The method of claim 22, wherein an organization having an e-mail system desires to have messages that are sent to do a departed member's e-mail address forwarded to a successor member's e-mail address, and wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses includes:

associating the departed member's disfavored e-mail address with the successor member's e-mail address as a corresponding forwarding address.

39. The method of claim 38 further including the following steps prior to the forwarding step:

identifying that the disfavored e-mail address is that of the departed organization member,

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message originally intended for the departed organization member will be forwarded to the successor organization member, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

40. The method of claim 22 wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further comprises:

- registering an organization e-mail system with the e-mail forwarding computer;
- uploading domain name information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer;
- uploading e-mail address format information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer; and
- uploading organization member e-mail address change information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer.

41. The method of claim 22 further including:

- storing unwanted sender address information associated with corresponding forwarding e-mail addresses;
- identifying a sender address in the received message;
- prior to the step of forwarding at least a portion of the received message, determining whether the sender address is an unwanted sender address associated with the forwarding e-mail address; and
- if the sender address is an unwanted sender address associated with the forwarding e-mail address, then canceling the step of forwarding at least a portion of the received message.

42. The method of claim 22 further including:

- storing information at the e-mail forwarding computer relating to an unforwardable received message if no forwarding e-mail address is determined by the e-mail forwarding computer;
- after the step of storing information, registering e-mail addresses with the e-mail forwarding computer;
- determining a registered e-mail address corresponding to the unforwardable received message using the stored information;

forwarding at least a portion of the previously unforwardable received message to the registered e-mail address or an e-mail address associated with the registered e-mail address in the e-mail forwarding computer.

43. The method of claim 42 wherein prior to forwarding at least a portion of the previously unforwardable received message the following steps occur:

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message will be forwarded, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before forwarding at least a portion of the previously unforwardable received message.

44. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of:

sending an e-mail message from an originator to an e-mail address at an e-mail system server for an e-mail service provider;

determining at the e-mail system server that the e-mail address is undeliverable;

returning the undeliverable message to the originator;

including a prompt, along with the returned undeliverable message from the e-mail system server to the originator, to send the undeliverable message to the electronic address for the e-mail forwarding computer; and

sending the undeliverable e-mail message from the originator to the e-mail forwarding computer whereby the undeliverable message becomes the received message at the e-mail forwarding computer.

45. The method of claim 44 wherein the prompt comprises an activatable link to automatically send the undeliverable message to the electronic address for the e-mail forwarding computer; and the step of sending the undeliverable e-mail message includes activating the activatable link.

46. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of:

sending an e-mail message from an originator to an e-mail address at an e-mail system server for an e-mail service provider;

determining at the e-mail system server that the e-mail address is undeliverable;

returning the undeliverable message to the originator;

sending the undeliverable e-mail message from the originator to the e-mail forwarding computer whereby the undeliverable message becomes the received message at the e-mail forwarding computer.

47. The method as recited in claim 46 wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further comprises:

receiving a forwarding address request indicating a disfavored e-mail address;

sending an address change confirmation request to the disfavored e-mail address;

receiving an address change confirmation response;

authenticating the address change confirmation response; and

storing the forwarding e-mail address and associated disfavored e-mail address for the forwarding address request for which an authenticated address change confirmation response is received.

48. The method of claim 47 wherein the step of authenticating includes identifying that the address change confirmation response came from the disfavored e-mail address.

49. The method of claim 47 wherein:

the steps of sending an address change confirmation request and authenticating the address change confirmation response use encryption verification.

50. The method of claim 47 further comprising the steps of:

identifying unverified forwarding e-mail addresses for which no authenticated address change confirmation response was received;

when the received message includes a disfavored e-mail address with an unverified forwarding e-mail address, sending a forward confirmation request, indicating

that an unverified forwarding e-mail address has been determined, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

51. The method of claim 46 further comprising the steps of:

linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule; and

the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further includes:

identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be associated;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule;

determining whether associating the disfavored e-mail address with a corresponding forwarding address is in accordance with the linked forwarding rule;

aborting the association of the disfavored e-mail address with the corresponding forwarding address if it is not in accordance with the associated forwarding rule

52. The method of claim 51 including the step of setting a forwarding rule for a domain name, the rule disallowing associating forwarding e-mail addresses with disfavored e-mail addresses with the domain name unless a request to make the association is received from a particular address.

53. The method of claim 51 including the step of setting a forwarding rule for a domain name, the rule disallowing associating forwarding e-mail addresses with disfavored e-mail addresses with the domain name unless a request to make the association includes a valid security code.

54. The method of claim 46 further comprising the step of:

linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule; and

the step of forwarding further includes:

identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and

formatting the portion of the message to be forwarded in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

55. The method of claim 46 further comprising the steps of:

linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule;

identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and

sending a return message to a message originator in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

56. The method of claim 46 further comprising the steps of:

linking an address domain name to at least one forwarding rule;

identifying the address domain name of a disfavored e-mail address to be forwarded;

determining whether the identified address domain name has a linked forwarding rule; and

wherein the step of forwarding includes forwarding the portion of the message in accordance with the linked forwarding rule.

57. The method of claim 56 wherein the step of forwarding the message in accordance with the linked forwarding rule further includes:

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message will be forwarded, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

58. The method of claim 46, wherein an organization having an e-mail system desires to have messages that are sent to do a departed member's e-mail address forwarded to a successor member's e-mail address, and wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses includes:

associating the departed member's disfavored e-mail address with the successor member's e-mail address as a corresponding forwarding address.

59. The method of claim 58 further including the following steps prior to the forwarding step:

identifying that the disfavored e-mail address is that of the departed organization member,

sending a forward confirmation request, indicating that the message originally intended for the departed organization member will be forwarded to the successor organization member, to a message originator; and

waiting until a forwarding confirmation authorization is received from the message originator before initiating the forwarding step.

60. The method of claim 59 further including the steps of:

including an activatable link along with the forwarding confirmation request, wherein the activatable link will automatically send the forwarding confirmation authorization to the e-mail forwarding computer when activated by the message originator.

61. The method of claim 46 wherein the step of associating a plurality of disfavored e-mail addresses further comprises:

registering an organization e-mail system with the e-mail forwarding computer;

uploading domain name information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer;

uploading e-mail address format information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer; and

uploading organization member e-mail address change information for the organization e-mail system to the e-mail forwarding computer.

62. A method to forward messages to forwarding e-mail addresses, the method comprising:

receiving an e-mail message from an originator to an e-mail address at an e-mail system server for an e-mail service provider;

determining at the e-mail system server that the e-mail address is undeliverable;

returning the undeliverable message to the originator;

including a prompt, along with the returned undeliverable message from the e-mail system server to the originator, to send the undeliverable message to the electronic address for an e-mail forwarding computer.

63. The method of claim 62 wherein the prompt comprises an activatable link to automatically send the undeliverable message to the electronic address for the e-mail forwarding computer.